THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI): (a) and (b) There is no official estimate of black money in India. The National Institute of Public Finance and Policy in their report on 'Aspects of Black Economy in India' have estimated the black income in 1983-84 between 31,584 to 36,786 rupees in crores. The authors have however, admitted that their estimate is based on enormous assumptions and approximations each of which can be challenged.

(c) Government is fully committed to combat the menace of black money. All possible measures to curb generation of black money, legislative, administrative and institutional, are being taken from time to time. As a result of liberal fiscal policies, revenue collections have gone up in the last financial year. The liberalisation of Summary Assessment Scheme and reduction in the tax rates of direct taxes is, however, only one limb of the policy. The other limb is intensive scrutiny and searches and seizures in the remaining cases so as to leave no doubts in the minds of taxpayers that they cannot get away with anything they declare in their returns of income. Enforcement machinery is being strengthened and the number of searches have substantially increased.

Export of Engineering goods

1380. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pelased to state:

(a) what quota has been fixed for the export of engineering goods for the current financial year; and

(b) what would be the requirement of steel to reach the target of export in this sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BRAHM DUTT): (a) There are no quotas fixed for export of engineering items.

(b) The requirement of steel and pig iron for engineering export in 1986-87 as estimated by the Engineering Export Promotion Council is 6,32,975 tonnes.

Export of Diamond

1381. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact the diamond export is concentrated in the hands of few persons;

(b) how many registered exporters are there in this field; and

(c) whether Government have any plans to make this trade more broad-based?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BRAHM DUTT): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) There were over 1,400 exporters of diamonds in 1985-86 registered with the Gem Jewellery Export Promotion Council. This number has been increasing continuously.

Purchase of tobacco by S. T. C.

1382. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that purchase of tobacco from farmers is handled by middlemen who pocket major share of the profit;

(b) what are the reasons for which STC is not making direct purchase of tobacco as is being done by the Food Corporation of India in the case of foodgrains; and

(c) what is the quantum and value of tobacco exported during 1985-86, country-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BRAHM DUTT): (a) Virginia Tobacco is being purchased by the registered exporters and dealers in tobacco at the various auction platforms operated by the Tobacco Board in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

(b) The auction system ensures competition among the bidders and hence reasonable returns to the growers. The Tobacco Board steps in if there are no bidders at the minimum support price. Hence the necessity for STC to operate in a big way like the FCI has not been felt.

(c) A statement is enclosed.